

# Getting Back to Green

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How the Rise of Trendy Environmentalism  
Has Taken Us Off Track



# The Emblem of Environmental Risk

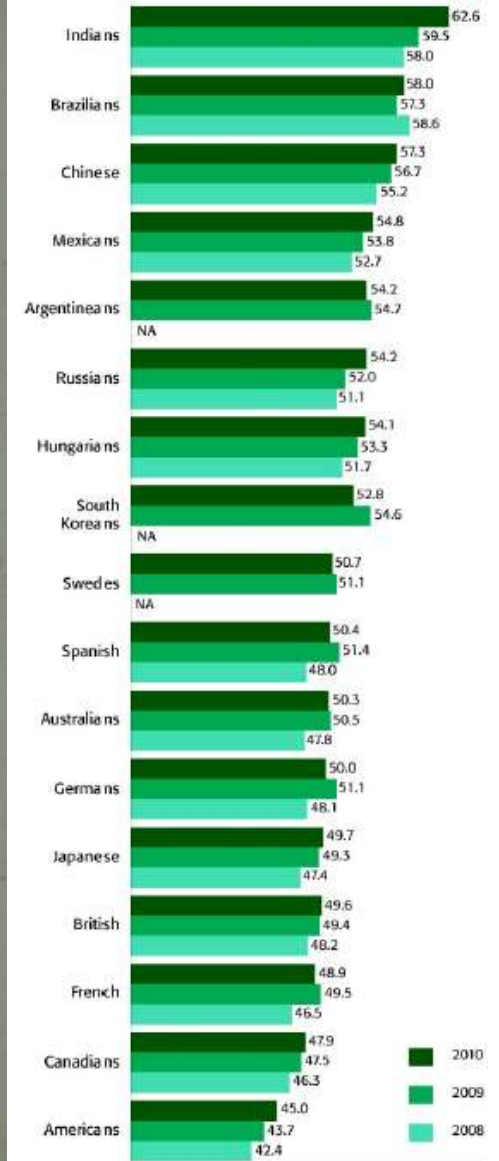
- In 1968, Paul Ehrlich said India was the very symbol of the environmental peril we faced
  - “I have yet to meet anyone familiar with the situation who thinks India will be self-sufficient in food by 1971.”
- He was wrong
  - Population is now 1.1 billion – twice the 1970 population
  - Standard of living has grown nearly 30 fold
- “The Population Bomb was too optimistic and that in many ways, the situation is far worse today than he could have imagined when he wrote the book in 1968.”  
- Ehrlich, 2008

# The Emblem of Environmental Living

- In 2008 National Geographic named the “greenest” country on the planet.
  - “That cold water bath many Indians have because there's no electricity... that 'matka' they use because they can't afford a fridge...and the long walk they take to work and back because private transport is expensive and public transport shoddy.”
  - This makes “them the most environmental-friendly denizens of Planet Earth.”

Greendex: Overall Rankings

Consumers in Each Country, 2008–2010



# What is Going On Here?

- Ehrlich says India is bad and getting worse
- National Geographic says India is the best and getting better
- Judgments are not based on science
  - Air and water quality is better in New York than Mumbai
  - Bjorn Lomborg noted that the “litany” of environmental claims is exaggerated
- Something else is playing a role
  - People generally act rationally
  - If their actions don't match words, there is another motive

# Being “Green” Makes People Feel Good



# The Rise of Trendy Environmentalism

- Being green makes people feel better about themselves
  - “Consumer choices reflect not only price and quality preferences but also social and moral values, as witnessed in the remarkable growth of the global market for organic and environmentally friendly products.”
- People are willing to pay more for that image
  - Two economists studied “conspicuous conservation”
  - Found that people in Washington were willing to pay up to \$1,300 more for a Prius than another hybrid
- Green helps the self image – that’s what’s being bought

# Image Before Environment

- The problem with this approach is that it puts a green image ahead of environment
  - Solar panels on the “nation’s greenest prison” cost \$880,000. Will avoid carbon emissions worth \$6,700.
  - JLARC’s study of “green” schools released this year found the payback period was about 30 years. They estimate the lifespan of a school at 20 years.
  - Washington’s climate strategy will “limit emissions growth to 3 percent between now and 2020. However, the state isn’t on track to meet its statutory reduction limit for 2020 or beyond.” National emissions estimated to increase by 0.6 percent.



There is an Alternative

**I'm an environmentalist, but NOT  
the anti-human collectivist kind**

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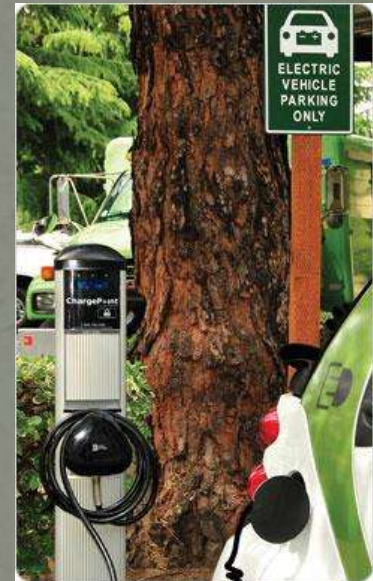
# Creativity Comes From the Market

- Free market incentives create opportunities to reduce environmental impact
- Plastic bottles
  - Eco-Fina – Aquafina's eco-shape bottle
  - Plantbottle – Coca-cola's green bottle
  - Brita water filter
- What do you care about
  - Resource depletion?
  - Renewable sources of material?
  - Using less material?



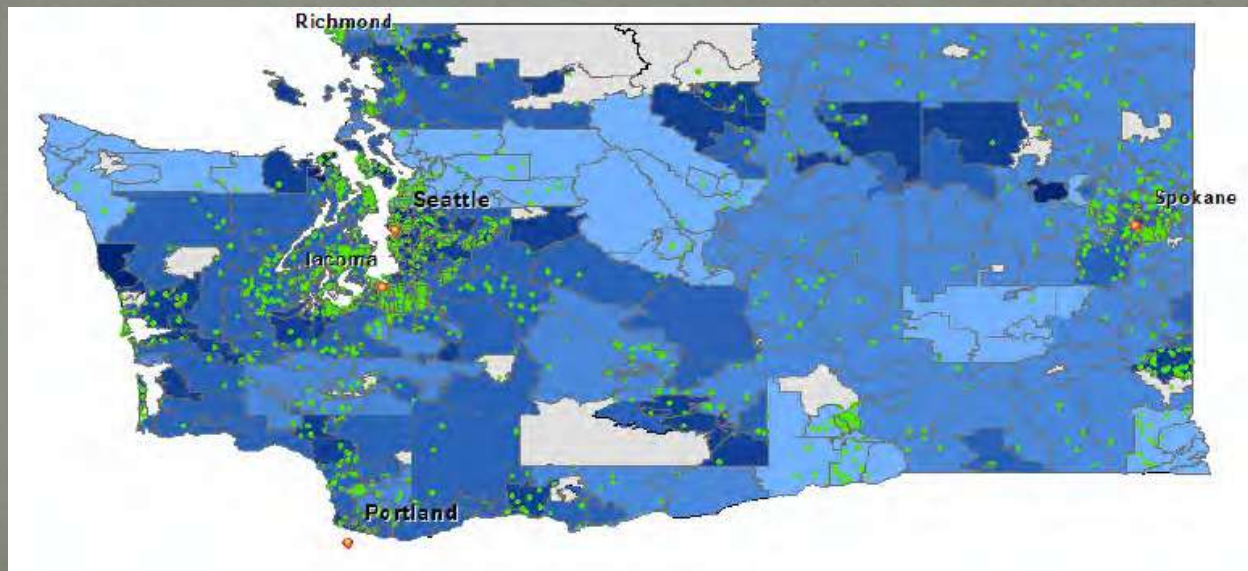
# Electric Cars

- Government has been pushing electric cars for years
  - Subsidize development and purchase
  - Subsidize charging stations
  - Electric cars with limited range are finally on the market
- Why?
  - Laptop computers
  - Battery technology for laptops helped make electric cars more viable
- Targeted investment didn't work. Free market did.



# Conservatives and the Environment

- Too often those who believe in the free market see the environment as the domain of the left
- But conservatives live in the environment
- Compare where people buy hybrids to where nature is



# Now is the Time to Offer Alternative

- People are turning against the environmentalists
  - Too expensive
  - Support for their agenda is falling
- People still care about the environment
- They want an alternative
- In three to five years, people will feel they have some disposable income and be willing to consider spending on the environment
- Have to develop an alternative now

# A Fresh Start on the Environment

- An alternative needs to meet several criteria
- Economically responsible
  - If it isn't economically sustainable it isn't environmentally sustainable
  - Inland Empire Oilseed and GH Paper learned this
- Approach must be innovative and nimble
  - Government isn't designed for innovation
  - “Over 90 percent of subsidies are on deploying technology and not on R&D.” – Bill Gates
- Accountability is critical
  - If we aren't achieving the goal, we need to change

# Environmental Priorities

- How do we choose priorities?
  - WCV sits down and determines what they want
  - They present it to Olympia and legislators follow
  - The reward is a “green” image
- How we should choose priorities
  - What are scientific risks?
  - Where can we get the most bang for the buck?
  - Put resources where they will make the greatest impact on environmental quality
- Environmental Priorities Act

But wait, there's more...

